

# the chronicle

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Miranda dreaming  
of film deal on book**

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**Big chance for young  
to shine as curtain  
goes up for panto**

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## Burnt Tree to face new roadworks

A SIX-MONTH set of roadworks is to cause more misery for motorists travelling through the Burnt Tree Island bottleneck.

A £1.3m red route scheme will affect a near two-mile stretch of road, leading from Burnt Tree Island on the Tipton and Dudley border, along the A461 Dudley Port and Horseley Heath.

Motorists are already putting up with delays at the island, which is undergoing £12.5m of works to transform it from a five-arm roundabout into a new four-arm crossroads.

Now, under the red route plan, lanes will be closed and temporary traffic lights brought in to allow more traffic lights to be installed and lines laid down.

Councillor Derek Rowley Sandwell Council's neighbourhoods chief, asked traders and motorists "to bear with us" while the works take place.

The first phase will take place between a half-mile stretch from the junctions of Sedgley Road East and Lower Church Lane with the A461. Traffic lights will be upgraded at the Sedgley Road East junction and traffic lights introduced at the Lower Church Lane junction.

## Fundraiser at castle tower

AN extra day of Christmas was enjoyed in Dudley when a group of fundraisers dressed as Santa abseiled down the walls of the town's historic castle to raise cash for sick children.

Children visiting Dudley Zoo looked up in delight as the team of 34 Santa lookalikes took it in turns to descend from the top of one of the castle's towers last Friday.

It was originally set to take place on December 20 but the heavy snow and wintry weather forced its cancellation. Cash raised will buy equipment for Russells Hall Hospital's neo-natal and children's wards.

## Support group to get NHS update

A CANCER support group will discuss changes in the NHS at a meeting next Wednesday.

The Halesowen branch of Cancer Support will welcome Ian McGarry of Dudley Local Involvement Network. The meeting is free to attend and takes place at Halesowen United Church, Hagley Road, from 2-4pm.

## College's open day

PROSPECTIVE students can learn more about life at Halesowen College, Whittinham Road, at an open day on January 29.

# CABLE THEFT STOPS MUSEUM TRAMS



Driver Mike Dunn at the Black Country Living Museum where they are having to run buses after power lines for the trams were stolen by metal thieves

It just shows the depths people will plumb to steal

## Hospice service lights up church

MORE than 600 people paid respects to loved ones at a service run by a Black Country hospice.

The Mary Stevens Hospice Tree of Light service was postponed on December 5 due to freezing conditions but people crowded into St Mary's Parish Church, Church Road, Oldswinford, Stourbridge, for the re-arranged service on Saturday night.

Pupils from Peters Hill Primary School choir sang three hymns and 15-year-old Esther Turner of Leasowes Community Colleged Halesowen, performed I Have a Dream while also playing acoustic guitar.

The West Midlands Police Pipe Band performed Amazing Grace.

The service would usually be held around the tree in the grounds of the hospice, in Hagley Road, Stourbridge, when it is illuminated with lights but hospice staff hospice said they still wanted to hold a commemorative event.

Christmas hymns were replaced and poems written by patients and families read.



Esther Turner, aged 15, with pupils from Peters Hill Primary at the Tree of Light service

SECURITY measures at the Black Country Living Museum have been stepped up after metal thieves stole a section of overhead cabling, grinding tram services to a halt.

Raiders got into the site on Tipton Road, Dudley, during the early hours of Tuesday, January 11, and removed the copper wiring from the tramway, cutting off the supply to the overhead supply.

Museum bosses said they were "disgusted" by the theft and now security has been stepped up to prevent further raids.

A vintage coach service has been put in to replace the trams and trolleybuses while repairs are carried out.

It is not yet known how much repairwork will cost but all maintenance will be funded solely by the museum.

Museum spokeswoman Fiona Carding said: "The museum is currently working to repair the overhead wiring and restore the tram service for the enjoyment of our visitors."

"Police are currently investigating the case but as a result of these events the museum is stepping up its security to ensure nothing like this happens again."

"It will be a few more weeks until the trams are back in service. We are currently in the early stages on assessment and a sched-

ule of work is being drawn up to ensure that the necessary repairs are completed as soon as possible.

"The museum is naturally very disappointed by the incident," she added.

The museum's trams include the Dudley & Stourbridge single-deck No.5, built in Tivdale in 1920, the No 34, the newly-restored open top Wolverhampton 49 double-decker and an early Wolverhampton and Dudley Tramway Company horse tram which saw final service as Wolverhampton Works Car No. 19.

Director of the museum's board of trustees, Councillor Les Jones, also deputy leader of Dudley Council, said: "It just shows the depths people will plumb to steal."

### Shame

"Metal is pulling in a good price, which is why people have done it but is a fairly risky thing to do. And it is taking a much-loved attraction away from the visitors to the museum. It is a great shame."

A notice has been put on the museum's website informing visitors that "due to operational reasons the tram and trolleybuses are unavailable until further notice."

Police spokeswoman Jaspreet Jagdev urged anyone with information to call 0845 113 5000.

The incident is the latest in a string of metal thefts in the region. Since April 2009 there have been 85 cable thefts across the West Midlands rail network.

## Baroness officially opens sixth form

HALESOWEN'S Windsor High School sixth form building has been opened by Baroness Campbell, currently chair of Sports UK and former head of the Youth Sports Trust.

The sixth form has been taking pupils since the beginning of the school year last September, but was officially opened last Friday.

James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, also attended the opening of the building on the Richmond Street site.

During the visit Mr Morris met with head Keith Sorrell and Dr Colin White, chair of governors. The MP also took in a ballet dancing performance from sixth form students.

Mr Morris said: "Windsor High School is moving from strength to strength."

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## thechronicle

## Poppy Appeal record broken

THE Royal British Legion in Kingswinford is celebrating another record-breaking year for the annual Poppy Appeal after raising more than £31,000.

Jubilant fundraisers have beaten last year's total of £28,000 despite people feeling the effects of today's tough economic climate.

The Kingswinford branch has seen an increase in support from people in recent years due to the continuing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. The amount raised in 2009 beat the total of £22,000 raised in 2008.

"The branch's Poppy Appeal organiser, Alan Barratt, said 'This is a tremendous achievement given the current economic climate. My thanks go to local supermarkets, businesses and traders, and the Merry Hill Centre.

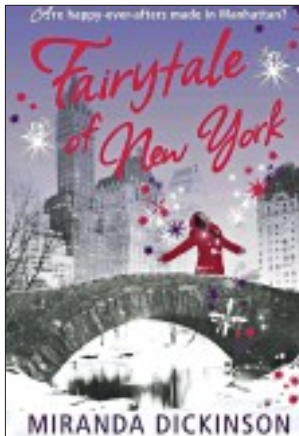
### Helpers

"We must not forget also our members and helpers who gave many hours of their time selling poppies, the Kingswinford Air Cadets the poppy walkers and anyone else who helped in any way.

"The help given by the Women's Section is appreciated not only in collecting but also the hours given counting. This has, as usual, been a real team effort. Finally, thanks must go to the public for their unflinching and continued generosity."

The amount raised for the appeal includes a £500 donation from Covanta Energy of Pensnett Trading Estate with a further £200 donated by their staff.

# 'Fairytale' author in dream of film glory



Part of the cover of Miranda's debut novel *Fairytale of New York* - now a Hollywood film producer is interested in turning the romantic comedy centred around a British florist who buys a shop and discovers a new life, into a film

A BLACK Country author is dreaming of Hollywood after a member of a top producer's team showed an interest in adapting her debut novel.

*Fairytale of New York* by Miranda Dickinson, aged 37, shot straight into the Sunday Times Top 20 list just a week after it was launched and has sold 106,000 copies to date.

Now a producer colleague of Jerry Bruckheimer, whose hits include *The Rock*, *Top Gun* and the *Pirates of the Caribbean*, said he would be interested in turning the tale into a movie.

And real life proved better than fiction for Miranda when she received a very special Christmas present - a marriage proposal.

Her story was given its own happy-ever-after when her boyfriend 33-year-old Jim White proposed at Christmas. And she accepted.

He wrote 'Marry Me' on a gingerbread Christmas tree decoration before getting down on



Literary dream - author Miranda Dickinson, aged 37

bended knee. The author, of Richardson Drive, Wollaston, was signed up by a publishing firm when she posted her story on a website for unsigned authors after she was made redundant from her job as a copywriter.

### Friends

Miss Dickinson said the member of Mr Bruckheimer's team emailed her to say his wife "loved" the book.

The movie-maker, who Miss Dickinson does not want to

name at this stage, has recently worked on *The Killers* with Ashton Kutcher and has established his own production company.

He told Miss Dickinson that Hollywood was looking for the next big romantic comedy.

The novel's plot centres around female friends in New York who meet up in coffee shops to discuss their various lives and loves.

She passed the email on to her publishers Harper Collins, who will begin discussions over

selling rights. "It would be a dream come true," she said. "It's come totally out of the blue and it's phenomenal to think that someone who makes films actually thinks they could use my book."

The novel tells the story of florist Rosie Duncan, a British woman who buys a floristry shop in the Big Apple and discovers a new life.

Miss Dickinson's follow-up, *Welcome to my World*, has already sold 36,000 copies since November.

## Shops could replace eyesore

SHOPS could soon be built on land that has blighted Blackheath for years.

Mark Hewitt bought the site in Halesowen Street at auction last month to the relief of other business owners in the area.

He wants to build four new shops with flats above and has asked architects to draw up plans.

He hopes to request building permission in the next few months.

"At the moment, the site is an unusual size, so I'm demolishing the out-buildings so we have a nice square shape," he said. "But I don't know what we'll be able to build at this stage.

### Gateway

"The architects are looking at what can be done with the space available, so I need to hear from them. Ideally we would like to build four shops with a gateway."

Mr Hewitt bought the site, on which a flower shop and a boot repair business used to stand, for just under £35,000 at auction on December 8.

The sale has been welcomed by traders who had been complaining about the eyesore site for the past five years.

Mr Hewitt owns four buildings in High Street, behind the site, including his own business Philip Eley Butchers.

It is hoped work on the site could start in April.

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## £2.2m is spent on school taxi runs

CASH-strapped Dudley Council spends more than £2.2 million a year on taxis taking children to and from school, new figures reveal – but it hopes to save tens of thousands by using public transport instead.

Disabled and vulnerable children will be taken to school by Dudley Council workers rather than taxis under new plans.

Until now the youngsters would be transported in a taxi if they were incapable of walking to school or it was judged too dangerous for them.

Now, to save cash, a "buddy" will accompany them on a bus or, in some cases, walk with the child.

The scheme is being trialled on two children at the moment, making a total saving of £6,600 per year.

### Saving

It will now be widened out across Years 10 and 11 and eventually could be available for all age groups.

Council spokesman Phil Parker said it was not yet known how many children would take part in the scheme, so a total saving could not be given.

Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show the council spent £2,219,555 on private taxi companies taking youngsters to school in 2009/10.

In total 760 pupils were transported on 190 school days. Of these children, 706 had special educational needs, while five journeys were made on medical grounds and 14 because of concerns over road safety.

# Safety fears as lorries unload on new footpath

LORRIES delivering to two convenience shops in Kinvor are putting pedestrians in danger by parking on pavements newly-laid as part of a major makeover of the High Street, it is claimed.

Complaints have been made about lorries delivering to Spar and the Co-op in the village which have no allocated unloading area.

Traffic is blocked if drivers park in the road but unloading on the pavement outside the shops or the Constitutional

Club has prompted safety concerns. There are also concerns about the damage the vehicles will cause to the smart block paving, which as part of a revamp of the village centre has cost £900,000.

Kinvor parish council clerk Jenny Spaul told a public meeting that 34 large lorries and 20 smaller ones delivered to the Co-op alone each week.

She has contacted the Co-op head office about the problem of parking on pavements. She also said: "We have written to the shops to ask them to speak to the drivers and ask them to park considerately." Councillor Henry Williams wanted to know if there was any progress in the long-running effort to get a fence between the Spar and the Co-op pulled down to make a car park which the trucks could access. He said: "It is a safety issue."

He was advised by an officer from South Staffordshire District Council there is some resistance to the idea from the managers at Spar.

As part of the High Street works, which were completed at the end of November 2010, benches are still to be installed along the road and councillors are asking the district council to do so as a matter of urgency to prevent lorries parking on pavements.

In the minutes of a previous council meeting, Mrs Spaul said she had been advised by police that it is not an offence for lorries to park on the pavement and unload as long as pedestrians are able to pass.

## Youngsters' big panto chance



The Young Ones members, front, Kennedy Bloomer as the genie with, middle from left, Julie Bowater, Sophie Hughes, Jensen Bloomer, and back, from the left, Holly Watson, Ellisha Morris, Melissa Parsons and Ellie Shuard

EXPERIENCED and novice performers will join forces to stage pantomime classic Aladdin in the Black Country.

The production will be staged by The Young Ones Pantomime Company at Netherton Arts Centre in Northfield Road, from Saturday, January 22, to 29.

More than 30 youngsters, aged from eight to 18, will be taking part in the show in supporting roles.

The main characters are performed by adult actors, including Rickey Dowell as Aladdin, Julie Bowater as the Princess and Mike Bradley as Widow Twankey.

Evening performances will all begin at 7.15pm and there will be matinees, starting at 2.15pm, held on January 22, 23 and 29. The cast members have been in rehearsals for the pantomime since September.

Tickets for the show are priced £7.50 and £8.50 and are available by calling 01384 895266.

## 'Ferry' service is to carry on

A TEMPORARY park-and-ride scheme for hospital workers in Dudley will be kept open a further three months while a dispute over parking passes is resolved.

It will cost the health trust which runs Russells Hall Hospital £30,000 per month to use to the Dreadnought Road site in Pensnett until the end of March.

Around 3,300 workers, who had applied for permits, have been granted temporary access to all hospital car parks, including Deadnought Road, until a final decision about who is allowed a pass is made.

Chief executive Paula Clark said: "To aid parking at Russells Hall Hospital for those staff who work shifts, need to visit patients

at home or move between sites, I have sent out a personal appeal asking staff who do not need their car on site to make use of the car park at Dreadnought Road."

The trust has already spent £1,075,000 ferrying staff between the Russells Hall site and the temporary car park in Dreadnought Road, Pensnett since February 2009.

It was set up while work on a new £6million staff car park, which opened in December, was completed.

Bosses said they would recoup the extra cost through parking charges and by reclaiming VAT.

In 2008, the hospital allocated half its capital budget of £12 million to building the multi-storey car park.

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# I have never met a kinder man – speedway boss's tribute to Les

A LEGEND of the Black Country speedway scene and well-known haulage boss has died aged 87.

Former Cradley Heath Speedway co-promoter Les Pottinger was associated with the Cradley Heathens for more than three decades.

The grandfather-of-eight, who lived in Dudley for around 50 years, died on Saturday, January 8, from kidney failure after a long illness.

He is survived by his wife Roma, 84, and three children David, Stella and Julian.

Mr Pottinger was a keen speedway fan and a regular in the stands at Cradley Heathens' former Dudley Wood Stadium.

He became associated with the club as a sponsor through his haulage business LP Transport, now managed by his son David.

The business was established by Mr Pottinger in 1952 and is based, in Hainge Road, Tividale, Oldbury.

"He contributed to the sport in so many ways and he was very popular among a large

number of people," said David, 52. Mr Pottinger eventually became part of the Heathens management team and was a co-promoter.

He also sponsored individual riders and launched Cradley's LP Transport Trophy event in the 1970s.

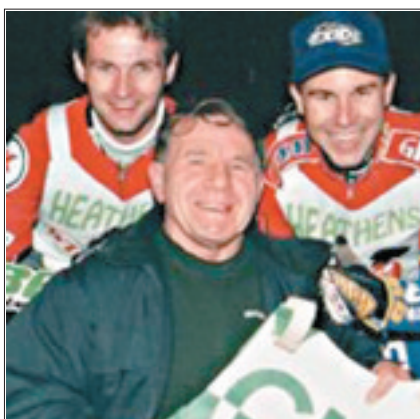
Mr Pottinger's love for the shale track led him to become involved with the consortium offering to buy Dudley Wood Stadium from landowners Derek Pugh and the Bridgewater family back in 1995.

## Unsuccessful

But their bid was unsuccessful with the Heathens eventually being forced to fold. The club made its successful comeback as the Dudley Heathens this year. But due to ill health Mr Pottinger was unable to attend events.

Dudley Heathens team manager is Mr Pottinger's grandson Will is keeping the family tradition going.

David said: "This is a very sad time for the family and everyone who knew dad, because of his illness it was a matter of when rather than if



Les Pottinger with a couple of Cradley Heathens in 1997

and thankfully he passed away peacefully at home.

"He worked until he was 80 and a large part of his life was spent enjoying his speedway."

Club chairman Nigel Pearson said: "I have never met a kinder, nicer man than Les. He was generous, loyal and great company."

# Sweeteners bid to free up homes

## Son, 20, punched own dad on head



Award winning pub – landlord and lady Andy Clark, aged 44, and Mandy Britton, 39, front, with staff Jody Watson, Linda Brooks, Sam Jones and Susan Grainger

## A marque of success

A TIPTON pub that has raised thousands of pounds in memory of a soldier killed in Afghanistan has won two awards.

The Kings Arms has been named Marston's Pub Company's regional newcomer of the year and it has also been awarded the Cask Marque for its excellent selection and quality of ales.

The pub has donated £1,000 to the Grenadier Guards Colonel's

Fund, which buys equipment for serving and injured soldiers, after a family fun day.

It has raised funds in memory of Tipton-born Guardsman Daniel Probyn who was killed in 2007, aged just 22.

His cousin, Mandy Britton, is the landlady of the pub in Toll End Road, which she runs with partner Andrew Clark, aged 44.

MORE than 350 large council houses in Dudley are each being occupied by a sole person, it has emerged.

Those living in larger homes, deemed to be three bedrooms or more, are being offered incentives to downsize to a smaller property.

The offer is an attempt by council chiefs to tackle the borough's waiting lists. Dudley Council chiefs say the new scheme is aimed at sole tenants and couples who find they are living in a property which has now become too large for their needs, or too difficult for them to maintain.

A specialist housing advisor has been brought in by the local authority to help tenants by providing help to meet their particular needs.

They could be offered support with removal costs, arranging for cookers or washing machines to be disconnected and reconnected or help with packing.

## Dedicated

Bosses say no specific amount of cash has been set aside for the scheme and each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Councillor David Simms, cabinet member for housing, said: "By moving from a four-bedroom house to a one bedroom property tenants could reduce their bills up to £2,000 a year – which is a significant saving in the current economic climate."

"People are often put off the idea of moving as they feel there will be too much inconvenience and paperwork to get through."

"But with this scheme they will be helped by a dedicated officer," he added.

Tenants moving from family houses to flats or one bedroom bungalows will also get high priority for a home of their choice. For more details call 01384 812081.

A BLACK Country man has been placed under supervision for a year after he admitted repeatedly punching his own father following a boozy night out.

David Russell Whitbread, aged 20, of Ploverdale Crescent, Kingswinford, pleaded guilty to assault when he appeared before Dudley magistrates last Thursday.

Whitbread was also enrolled on a programme to help curb his drinking and ordered to pay £85 costs.

Mr Mark Cooper, prosecuting, said Whitbread had returned to his parents' address on December 27 following a night out with his girlfriend.

## Reconciled

He said an argument took place between the pair and Whitbread's father tried to phone the police.

"The defendant then punched his father with clenched fists about the head."

Mr Jason Georgiou, defending, said the family was now reconciled and Whitbread's parents wanted him to come home.

"He is genuinely apologetic for what he did," he added.

Chairman of magistrates Mr George Booth said: "We accept alcohol played a big part in the acts you carried out."

# Empty shops, offices and land to go as council in bid to save £27m

A SHOP that has lain empty for 15 years is one of a raft of properties put up for sale by Sandwell Council to raise money.

The authority is trying to save £27 million and is selling off land and buildings across the borough to bring in extra cash.

The portfolio is believed to be worth in the region of £4m.

It includes empty shops offices and land across the six towns.

The former Pullingers electrical shop, land on Alexandra Road used during the construction of the Tipton Tunnel and a

Smethwick cemetery lodge are among the sites to be put up for sale.

Councillor Ian Jones, cabinet member for jobs and economy, said the council needs to realise its assets as it battles government cuts.

## Example

He said: "I don't believe it is acceptable for the council to hold on to property and land when an effective use could be found by selling it."

"It will have the additional benefit of clearing up areas by off-loading derelict

buildings that will then be either brought back to life or demolished and redeveloped.

"The Pullingers shop in Park Lane East, Tipton, is a prime example. It has been closed for around 15 years, since the company moved to Union Street."

"The building has been lying empty ever since."

"Properties like this need to be sold off and brought into some kind of use."

Councillor Jones has assured the public that no amenities will be lost as a result of the plans to put the premises on the market.

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## Festival defies gloom

A BLACK Country arts festival is set to return this year despite no money yet being available to fund it.

The first Sandwell Arts Festival was held in the borough last year and was deemed a massive success with at least 17,000 people taking part. Sandwell's cabinet member for youth, culture and leisure, Councillor Ann Shackleton is now being asked to support proposals for a second festival this year at a meeting next Tuesday.

However, a report to Councillor Shackleton states at the moment there is no money to fund it. The report states that the Arts Council has indicated an interest in seeing a second festival, however the council needs to find £10,000 in order to secure £15,000 match funding from the Arts Council.

This year's festival is proposed to have a theme of "industrial heritage".

# Fresh sighting of the 'Dudley Dorito' UFO

## Large scale search for players

A COMMUNITY wind band based in Dudley is on the lookout for new members.

The Thorns Community Music Group meets at the Thorns Community College in Quarry Bank.

Its next rehearsal is on Wednesday from 7pm and the band is appealing to would-be members to take along their instruments and join in.

The band is suitable for any adult who has an appropriate instrument – either wind or strings – who can read music and has the enthusiasm to improve.

The group says that in particular a double bass player is sought.

Member Adrian Barrett said: "Music played includes film themes, classical pieces and other popular tunes. We also do occasional performances."

The group has been in existence for about nine years and has a total of about 20 members.

For more information call Bobby Johnson on 01384 394501.



Band members Tom Lawrence, kneeling down, with back left to right, Violet Taylor, Bobby Johnson and Adrian Barrett, looking for new musicians

AFRESH sighting of a triangular UFO dubbed the "Dudley Dorito" racing through the skies has been reported in the Black Country – and this time it seemed to bring a friend.

Security officer Glyn Richards was having a cigarette in the garden of his home in Coppice Lane, Quarry Bank, when he saw a mysterious object with flashing lights in the sky appearing to travel towards Dudley from Halesowen.

Moments later, he said, another UFO with a steady white light appeared and seemed to chase it off.

"I never really believed in anything like that, but it was no helicopter or plane that I've ever seen," said father-of-two Mr Richards, aged 33.

"I had a perfect view of it for around 20 seconds. It had flashing red lights in the centre and white lights at the end. Then another thing with just a bright white light appeared and it looked like it scared it away as it shot off in a perfectly straight line."

It is the third reported sighting of the Dorito in as many years.

Mr Richards said he had called his nine-year-old daughter and seven-year-old son out of the house to see the objects.

He added: "I was shocked but it was quite exciting as well – it was probably just a military plane or something but it's interesting to think it could be something else," he said.

In November the triangular-shaped object was seen in the skies over Tipton.

It has also been spotted over the Merry Hill Shopping Centre, and over Oldbury. On April 16, 2009, builders working at West Midland Safari Park were also shocked to see a flying saucer-shaped object soaring above them.

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## thechronicle

## Wine bar ordered to stop trading

A WINE bar which has been operating without permission above a Kingswinford takeaway for months will have to cease trading after councillors intervened.

Complaints about the Alter Ego bar, situated above Prego Pizza in High Street, had been received last August.

But councillors were only able to impose an enforcement notice to bring trading to a halt at a council meeting last week.

Councillor Tim Wright, said it was unfair to other businesses if Alter Ego had been allowed to continue serving drinks without permission.

## Noise

The committee voted unanimously to impose an enforcement notice to stop the wine bar trading within one month unless it complied with regulations and returned to restaurant use.

Council enforcement officers discovered the first floor bar after a member of the public complained about noise at the building.

The bar had not obtained permission for a change of use for the first floor premises from a restaurant use into a wine bar use required by law, it emerged at the Development Control meeting.

The committee heard the bar's owners had submitted a retrospective planning application last October which was refused.

## Police to step up hot-spot patrols

## Digging into the past



Volunteer Mark Jeffs, aged 18, from Gornal shows Jade Salmon, aged nine, from Dudley, an ammonite

MUSEUM visitors were given a glimpse into the Black Country's ancient past when they were told the origins and history of fossils and minerals they had found in the area.

Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, in St James's Road, is staging fossil identification sessions which are open to the public every month. The first event for 2011 was held on Saturday and

A NEW police operation has been launched to tackle seasonal rises in crime in parts of Dudley.

Operation Intrusive will run from this month until the end of March.

It will focus on areas which have previously shown increased crime levels at the start of the year. The areas in Dudley are the border of St Thomas and St James neighbourhoods, particularly Castlegate, Kates Hill and the area around Dudley Leisure Centre, Brockmoor and Pensnett, particularly Brockmoor High Street, and around Merry Hill Centre and Silver End.

The north of Halesowen near the border with Sandwell, particularly around Long Lane and Nimmings Road, will also be targeted along with Lye in the areas off the High Street and Lye Bypass.

Police chiefs say seasonal analysis suggests that the areas may be vulnerable to offences such as burglary, vehicle crime, robbery and anti social behaviour.

## Patrols

To help crack down on any offences police will be executing warrants for drugs as well as running traffic operations, crime reduction drives and school visits.

Neighbourhood patrols will also be stepped up, and other issues set to be tackled include littering and graffiti.

Insp Richard Jones said: "These areas are by no means the overall places where we have the most calls for service or issues as a borough, but they are showing to be the neighbourhoods that unfortunately have seen a rise in crime at this time of year."

"December was a positive month for Dudley and we'll do all we can to make sure we continue to reduce crime, and the fear of crime in this area."

## Bill soars for safety measure on canal

WORK to repair a rock face at risk of collapse along a Dudley canal will cost £50,000 more than expected.

Council chiefs sanctioned £300,000 repair work in the Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines to prevent a landslide at Castle Mill Basin in October.

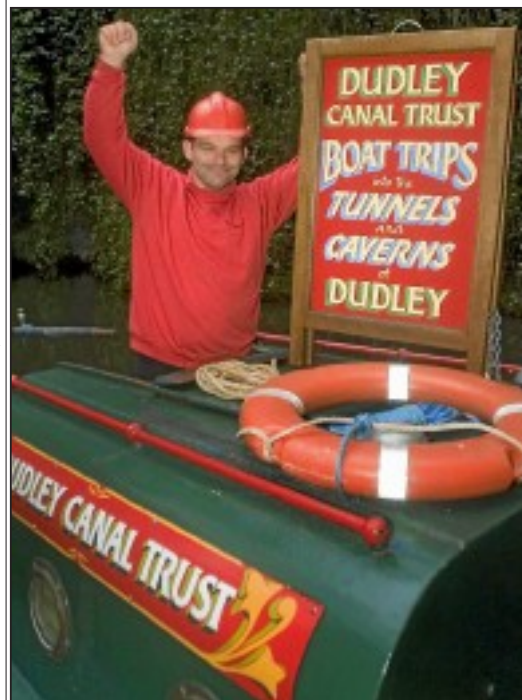
Workers are due on site in the next few weeks, but the final bill may be £350,000. Extra cash will, in part, ensure workers comply with health and safety issues.

The danger was first noticed by volunteers at the Dudley Canal Trust, which runs the attraction, in June 2009.

## Borrowed

Dudley Council spokesman Chris Howes said there was no imminent danger of collapse, but stabilisation was needed in the long term. The area, in a side of the basin where boats do not travel, is roped off. The extra cost of money borrowed for the work will be met by extending the repayment period from nine to 11 years.

A council report says increased costs are associated with "development of a design solution which meets both the complex technical and environmental constraints and the need to comply with stringent health and safety working procedures which meet both the HSE Mines Inspectorate and the Mine Managers requirements."



Getting ready for the start of the year's boat trips is skipper Mark Redfern from Dudley Canal Trust

## Barge trips to take in sights

THE new season of monthly canal trips along the entire length of the Dudley Tunnel will get under way on February 6.

The waterways trip, which has been organised by Dudley Canal Trust, will also offer the opportunity for visitors to take in the sights of the famous Limestone Mines and Caverns.

Passengers are asked to park their cars at the trust's base in Birmingham New Road where they will be transferred by coach to the trip's starting

point. The tour, which will last for two hours, also includes an audio visual show in Little Fess Cavern, music and light show in Singing Cavern and a chance to experience legging the boat through the tunnel.

Dudley Canal Trust spokeswoman June Hodgetts said: "It is one of the monthly specials we do and they are quite popular."

Tickets for the tour on February 6 are £9.75 for adults and £8.75 for concessions including the coach.

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## Tom, 16, soars into the record books



Tom Barker, aged 16, gives the thumbs-up as he prepares for take-off and below, in flight at the controls of the Cirrus SR20

A 16-YEAR-OLD soared into the record books when he took to the skies above the Black Country.

Tom Barker became the youngest pilot in the UK to fly the four-seater Cirrus SR20 solo when he set off on a 45-minute circuit from Halfpenny Green Airport in Bobbington.

The teenager, a pupil at Haybridge High School in Brake Lane, Hagley, has been flying under instruction for two years with Flight Academy Wolverhampton and wants to embark on a career in the cockpit.

### Licence

He completed the solo flight just a month after he became eligible to fly solo when he turned 16 on December 8.

"It's very exciting to be the youngest to do it," Tom said. "It was fantastic, I loved it." He added: "I have always been fascinated by planes. 'When we have gone on holiday - from our first one to Spain when I was seven - I have always been excited about the flight.'"

Tom wants to secure his pilot licence when he is 17.



# Woman spared prison over dog terror attack

A BLACK Country dog owner has avoided jail after her pet "viciously" attacked a woman passing by with her children and left her needing surgery on deep wounds to her hands.

The large bull terrier-type dog escaped from Sarah Billingham's back garden and attacked Majma Bi, who was walking down the street outside with her young children.

Billingham, of Adelaide Street, Brierley Hill, had tied the family pet up with a piece of frayed rope, Dudley Magistrates Court heard last Wednesday. The dog will now be destroyed. The victim was left with five deep cuts to her right palm and a two-inch wound on the back of the hand. She also had a number of slashes on her left hand, said Miss Rosie Sivia, prosecuting.

A neighbour had to drag the animal from the victim after it leaped on her and bit her, the court heard. Billingham, aged 25, was given a 12-month community order and told to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work. Billingham must pay £2,000 costs.

District Judge Graham Wilkinson said: "It must have been absolutely terrifying for this poor woman and her children. Your dog viciously attacked her and I'm afraid there's nothing that can be done to prevent it being destroyed."

District Judge Wilkinson told Billingham he would not make her pay compensation as he expected the victim to sue her for the July 8 attack. He added: "Many people in this country have a pre-occupation with owning large, powerful dogs as a status symbol."

Billingham was told she would have faced prison but the sentence was reduced due to her "good character". District Judge Wilkinson said: "You are a law-abiding citizen with no previous convictions. But dogs like this are potentially very dangerous and it is important they are not allowed to escape."

Mr Phillip Haycock, defending, said Billingham had taken the dog in because it was too big for the previous owner to look after. Billingham pleaded guilty to allowing her dog to be out of control in a public place and cause an injury.

## Quality care to stay - claim

FRONTLINE services such as social care will be the last to suffer as a result of spending cuts, Black Country council leaders have vowed.

Members assured a meeting of Dudley Council's cabinet last week that upcoming budget cuts of £22million would come first and foremost from "service modernisation and improved efficiency", with minimal impact on quality.

### Baskets

They denied accusations from opposition councillors that they "had it in" for the people of Dudley.

Cabinet member for finance Councillor David Blood said: "We have said for

some time that difficult decisions will have to be made. This budget report addresses those decisions, which we have made in light of 13 years of excess by the previous government."

Cabinet member for children's services, Councillor Liz Walker, also faced tough questions over whether children in care would suffer and reiterated the promise to find the savings from back office-type work, not removing services from the front line.

Among the first victims of the cuts will be the borough's hanging baskets which is expected to save £30,000.

Charitable donations are also expected to be pruned by £10,000.

## Bumper year for the vineyard



Halfpenny Green Vineyard owner Clive Vickers with some of his awards

BOSSSES at a Midland vineyard are looking forward to another record breaking year after a bumper crop in 2010.

Halfpenny Green Vineyard in Bobbington, near Stourbridge, produced enough grapes for 80,000 bottles of wine last year, double the normal amount.

And owner Clive Vickers said he hoped

for more of the same over the next 12 months. He said: "We are looking forward to 2011."

"It should be a good one. We have 80,000 bottles of wine from 2010 to sell which is the most we have had in a number of years."

He said the bumper crop was down to the warmer weather in early summer and dry conditions during the harvest in October.

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115-511		
947-005	Peugeot 206 1.4 00-04	76.54
190-355		

### BRAKE PADS

Examples:		
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FSL 1293	Clio 1.2/1.4/1.9 91-04	34.67
FSL 1276	Escort 1.4/1.6 95-99	39.78

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BRIDGESTONE				AVON										
	Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4			
155/70TR13	Bridgestone B250	£44.22	£82	£155	155/70TR13	Avon ZTS	£37.48	£71	£138	155/70TR13	Hero	£31.04	£56	£101
165/70TR13	Bridgestone B250	£49.82	£93	£179	165/70TR13	Avon ZTS	£39.75	£77	£148	165/70TR13	Hero	£32.86	£60	£117
175/70TR14	Bridgestone B250	£64.07	£121	£230	175/70TR14	Avon ZTS	£50.18	£97	£184	175/70TR14	Hero	£36.68	£66	£123
175/65TR14	Bridgestone B250	£54.54	£101	£189	175/65TR14	Avon ZTS	£42.38	£81	£153	175/65TR14	Duro	£38.45	£70	£133

### PERFORMANCE TYRES

BRIDGESTONE														
	Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4			
185/60HR14	Bridgestone ER300	£60.39	£112	£209	185/60HR14	Avon ZV3	£50.83	£97	£184	185/60HR14	Hero	£38.72	£70	£133
185/65HR14	Bridgestone B250	£70.64	£133	£255	185/65HR14	Avon ZV3	£54.84	£104	£199	185/65HR14	Trayal	£37.33	£69	£131
185/65HR15	Bridgestone ER300	£79.47	£152	£291	185/65HR15	Avon ZV3	£58.77	£111	£214	185/65HR15	Hero	£43.22	£81	£152
195/65HR15	Bridgestone B250	£67.02	£128	£245	195/65HR15	Avon ZV3	£53.64	£102	£194	195/65HR15	Hero	£44.58	£82	£153

### HIGH PERFORMANCE TYRES

BRIDGESTONE				AVON				FEDERAL						
	Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4			
195/50VR15	Bridgestone ER300	£57.71	£107	£203	195/50VR15	Avon ZV3	£50.83	£97	£184	195/50VR15	Fullway	£41.83	£77	£143
195/60VR15	Bridgestone ER300	£80.87	£152	£286	195/60VR15	Avon ZV5	£65.25	£123	£235	195/60VR15	Federal	£48.00	£90	£173
195/65VR15	Bridgestone ER300	£68.28	£128	£245	195/65VR15	Avon ZV5	£55.39	£103	£199	195/65VR15	Fullway	£45.31	£84	£161
205/55VR16	Bridgestone ER300	£78.08	£148	£281	205/55VR16	Avon ZV5	£66.68	£128	£245	205/55VR16	Federal	£59.96	£112	£214

### ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE TYRES

BRIDGESTONE				AVON										
	Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4			
205/50WR16	Bridgestone ER300	£109.13	£209	£398	205/50WR16	Avon ZV5	£80.52	£152	£291	205/50WR16	Hero	£53.82	£101	£194
205/55WR16	Bridgestone ER300	£84.08	£158	£301	205/55WR16	Avon ZV5	£69.72	£132	£250	205/55WR16	Hero	£56.10	£107	£203
225/45VR17	Bridgestone RE050	£112.40	£214	£407	225/45VR17 XL	Avon ZV5	£92.76	£179	£342	225/45VR17	Hero	£61.74	£112	£214
225/40VR18 XL	Br'stone RE050	£143.81	£276	£531	225/40VR18 XL	Avon ZV5	£108.50	£203	£393	225/40VR18	Fulway	£55.24	£104	£203

### FROM £41.83

		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4
195/50VR15	Fullway	£41.83	£77	£143
195/60VR15	Federal	£48.00	£90	£173
195/65VR15	Fullway	£45.31	£84	£161
205/55VR16	Federal	£59.96	£112	£214

### FROM £53.62

		Buy 1	Buy 2	Buy 4
205/50WR16	Hero	£53.62	£101	£194
205/55WR16	Hero	£56.10	£107	£203
225/45WR17	Hero	£61.74	£112	£214
225/40WR18	Fullway	£55.24	£104	£203

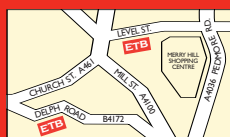
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In the lab are Inspector Drake (Alan Birch) and Sergeant Plod (Steve Witney)



Drake makes his point to forensic scientist Jack Savage (Rob Phillips)



The band Groucott and Haynes – Rob Groucott on piano, Carrie Pickering on sax, Steve Groucott on drums and Dan Haynes on guitar

# Drake in the swim with a switch to the big screen

A PLAYWRIGHT from Kidderminster will debut his first film on both sides of the globe.

Inspector Drake – The Movie, created by Quarry Bank-born writer David Tristram, will be premiered at the Bridgnorth Theatre On The Steps on Friday February 11 at 7.30pm.

But around 11,500 miles away the movie will also be showcased at the Tambourine Mountain Theatre on the Gold Coast of Queensland, Australia, and The New Plymouth Little Theatre, in New Zealand.

The theatres, which have staged a number of performances of the Inspector Drake plays, are hoping to help propel the film towards the Hollywood red carpet.

Celebrating his 25th year, hapless hero Drake has acquired cult status since appearing in the first production of Inspector Drake's Last Case.

With four stage hits now under his belt David – who also wrote the Little Grimley



Comic stage hero Inspector Drake is poised to transfer his skills to the big screen – with the film version screened on both sides of the world. Sarah Hazelwood reports

series – and his Flying Ducks Theatre Company have gone from strength to strength.

The low budget film, which took 10 months to complete, was shot in and around the Black Country and Shropshire, featuring scenes at the Seven Valley Railway and Wolverhampton's ancestral house, Chillington Hall.

Set in 1937, the work features comical Drake and his faithful sidekick Sergeant Plod. The pro-

duction, self-funded by David and Stourbridge actor Alan Birch who has played the Inspector from the start, has cost the duo around £10,000.

Adding on the free contributions and months of labour David said the final sum would have broken the £100,000 barrier – still a mere trifle compared with usual £150million Hollywood budget. The producer, from Highley, said: "We wanted to do something really special to cel-

ebate Inspector Drake still going strong after 25 years.

"It has been a very unusual and interesting experience and I am quietly hopeful that the film will take off and draw in the crowds.

## Fascinating

"It is going to be fascinating to see what happens. I am truly amazed that Drake has been so successful, not only here but all over the world.

"It is exciting to know that the film will also be seen so many miles away. I've always had a lot of support worldwide and I hope the production is as well received as the stage productions.

"You have to start somewhere. Now we just hope that where we finish will be a true sign of all the effort everyone has put in."

David who creates corporate videos for his filming company, also named Flying Ducks, is

currently putting the finishing touches to the two-hour feature.

He said: "Writing has always been my hobby but after putting so much effort into it over the years it is now more like my profession."

"I would definitely call the production a real labour of love and it would be great if it punched above its weight to become the success it deserves."

"You never know what will happen, it is just a

matter of seeing what the critics say."

A team of 50 actors and backstage crew have contributed and the film is expected to be screened at more theatres and independent cinemas throughout the year.

## Impressed

Alan, of Wollaston, Stourbridge, said: "We are hoping for a sell-out weekend. I am so impressed with the quality of the final film, movie@inspector-drake.c

supportive and we couldn't have done it without the generosity of those who contributed.

"I always knew that one day we would be able to get our work on the big screen. What started out as a bit of fun has really developed into something major and I believe that we definitely have the potential to take Hollywood by storm."

"Tickets range from £6.50 to £10. E-mail movie@inspector-drake.c



Writer David Tristram

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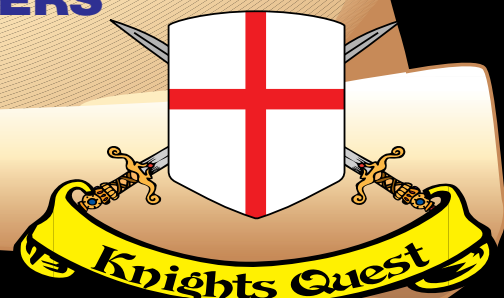
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# Town's heritage weaves its way into the museum



The museum entrance shared with Morrisons



Charles Talbot is overseeing the carpet museum project with wife Jean



View of the Stourvale Mill in Green Street back in 1855



Stourvale Mill next to Morrisons, Kidderminster



The Weaving Shed will be the first room you enter

IT WEAVED a reputation as a carpet capital of the world, creating designs which have graced floors from cricket pavilions to airport lounges and ocean liners.

Now a new project aims to turn the spotlight on skills which remain among the pride of the region.

A new museum is planned to focus on Kidderminster's illustrious carpet-making heritage, showing visitors how its reputation spread throughout the world. Kidderminster Carpet Museum Trust has been working for years to set up the museum, which is expected to bring in 24,000 visitors a year.

Members hope that the museum at the Grade II listed former carpet-making factory The Stourvale Mill in Green Street will become an attraction as well-known as the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, and the Red House Glass Cone, Wordsley.

The exterior of the building has been given a £500,000 renovation by Morrisons, which is based nearby.

The trust has leased the building from the supermarket for 50 years in order to create the carpet museum.

"Carpets are Kidderminster – and Kidderminster is carpets" is an old phrase that rings true today, says Charles Talbot, one of the key movers behind the project.

Despite the demise of all but a handful of the 25 or so carpet companies that used to be based in the town, the industry

still runs in the veins of many local people. And none more so than Charles, whose ancestors founded one of the town's early carpet manufacturing firms, G and H Talbot and Sons, in 1735. A former mayor of Kidderminster, who served the town as a Tory in 1965, Charles is now a driving force behind the planned new museum dedicated to the industry.

His ancestors moved from Wolverley to Kidderminster in the 1650s and were originally clothiers. But then the family spread from cloth manufacturing into carpets.

Henry Talbot, who founded the family carpet firm with his brother George, was Charles's great-great-great-grandfather. The family eventually sold their business, in 1869, to a young entrepreneur called Michael Tomkinson, who went on to develop it into one of the town's most famous and successful companies.

## Solicitors

The son of Brierley Hill's former MP, Conservative John Talbot, who served from 1959 to 1967, Charles himself is a lawyer. Now aged 79, he lives with his wife Jean in the village of Rock, near Bewdley, and still does consultancy work for Painters solicitors in Kidderminster.

The legal eagle side of the family started with Charles's great-great-grandfather William but he has always been fascinated by his forebears' historical links to the area's major industry, Charles said. "The man who started the carpet museum project in 1980 was Kenneth Tomkinson, who was

grandson of Michael and sales director of Tomkinson's. He and I met up and agreed there had got to be a carpet museum in the area. "He asked me to be a trustee and to do all the preliminary legal work. Unfortunately, Kenneth died in 1987 but I have continued with the work he set me.

"From 1992 to 1997 the project went into abeyance but I revived it in 1997, when a cousin of Kenneth's, Richard Pugh-Cook, joined me – him as chairman and me as secretary of the trust.

"Even though I've never been involved in carpets myself, the industry runs in my blood, and my wife Jean is equally committed to our work to get the museum off the ground."

The number of carpet factories in Kidderminster has dwindled, and the 15,000-strong workforce is now down to 1,200. "Even having just five factories is five more than most towns – so Kidderminster is still synonymous with the carpet industry," said Charles. "The town concentrates on woven carpet, as distinct from tufted, which is more the fashion now."

A grant of £1.9m towards the museum was approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) last September following years of work by the trust. And members hope it will be a matter of months before they don hard hats to watch as the museum is built. It is scheduled to open to the public in October 2012.

The museum will be split into two sections, one part celebrating Kidderminster's carpet-making heritage and the other charting the history of the town itself.

PLEASE NOTE: prices are per person unless otherwise stated and travel insurance is not included in the price. Coach pick-up points offered (excluding air, Eurostar breaks plus certain cruises) are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Call (01902) 319999 (Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email [starextra@expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:starextra@expressandstar.co.uk) (please include your name and address).

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PRICE FROM **£229**

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- A ride on the North Yorks Moor Railway
- Visits to Whitby, Harrogate and Richmond
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- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

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- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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Organised by Mistral Holidays (ABTA V0669, ATOL 6900)

### Krakow

Four days  
Various departure dates



PRICE FROM **£329**

- Return flights
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
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- Visits to the Castle District and Auschwitz-Birkenau
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

### Jersey

Four to eight days  
Various departure dates



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- Bed and breakfast accommodation
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- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Modern Travel Centre (ABTA V3101, ATOL 0752)

### South Africa

16 days  
Various departure dates



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- Tour Cape Point
- Winelands tour •Tour of Featherbed Nature Reserve
- Visit to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

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## COMPETITION



Offering clean lines and elegance in soft vanilla cream, this timeless Maine kitchen happily complements stainless steel appliances and is just one of many options available at the Focus stores

# Kitchen in FOCUS with chance to win £500 worth of improvements

WE'VE teamed up with Focus DIY on Dudley Road in Kingswinford to give lucky Chronicle readers the chance to win £500 worth of kitchen improvements.

A fantastic Zanussi appliance package up for grabs, consisting of a hob and fan-assisted oven as well as under-tile heating – what better way to kick-start your new year home improvements!

If you're looking for a brand new kitchen or bathroom, Focus DIY in Kingswinford features a great showroom accommodating an impressive range of kitchen and bathroom suites.

What's more, FOCUS offers a comprehensive and complimentary planning and design service on all kitchens. A consultant can visit your home to take accurate measurements, listen to your ideas, suggest possible solutions and present you with a variety of styles and layouts using the latest computer aided design technology.

Until January 30, 2011, FOCUS is offering all customers the chance to enjoy savings of up to 60 per cent on all new bathrooms and kitchens, all with free delivery.

And with the Focus Low Price Promise, the store will never be beaten on value. If a written quote for a kitchen or bathroom is presented at the store, FOCUS will match it, plus refund 10 per cent of the difference.

### HOW TO ENTER

To win simply answer the following question  
**How many stores do FOCUS operate throughout England, Scotland and Wales?**

Send your answer on a postcard to FOCUS COMPETITION, Chronicle series (editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Closing date Thursday, January 27, 2011.  
Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final. Only one entry per household.

**FOCUS**  
diy & gardening

The product, however, must be comparable in style, quality and structure and the quote must be within 14 days of issue or purchase. Please ask in store for further details of the scheme.

Everyone who gets a quote on a new kitchen between December 13 and January 23 will be entered into a draw to win a new kitchen worth £5,000.

Customers can also take advantage of a multitude of other appliance, workshop and sink offers, including 20 per cent off Maia solid surface workshops and a free television when you buy a sink module with two worktops.

FOCUS operates more than 175 stores throughout England, Scotland and Wales, offering products for the DIY and gardening enthusiasts all at competitive prices, trading under the brands FOCUS and No Frills.

For more information on Focus DIY products, visit [www.focusdiy.co.uk](http://www.focusdiy.co.uk). To be in with a chance of winning this great prize, simply answer the question in the 'How to enter' panel.

# Be nice to car parking staff, nurses ordered

## Gym creating healthy options

NEW fitness equipment has been installed at a Dudley leisure centre after membership rocketed from 350 to 1,300 in just two years.

Twenty-one machines, including treadmills, cross trainers and exercise bikes, have been set up at the Crystal Leisure Centre, in Stourbridge.

Gym manager Steve Spencer said: "The new year is a great time to get this done as people are thinking about getting healthy and increasing their fitness."

"With all the talk of the West Midlands being the most obese area in the UK, it's great that so many people are still joining gyms. This equipment will really help us to cater for all these new people."

The centre also has a 25 metre swimming pool, sports courts and fitness classes on offer.

The new equipment will be paid for by an expected £60,000-a-year increase in income.



Steve Spencer, gym manager at the Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge, tests out the latest equipment

SECURITY staff at Dudley's main hospital are being verbally abused by workers angry at new parking arrangements, forcing bosses to issue a directive to employees to be nicer.

Chief executive Paula Clark sent letters to Russell's Hall Hospital staff after reports of security workers being insulted.

It follows plans for a permit scheme being thrown into chaos in a dispute over who is allowed a space.

Firms running some hospital services have now refused to apply new parking restrictions to their workers.

Everyone has temporary access to staff car parks on a first-come-first-served basis while the issue is resolved.

### Determine

Ms Clark said the trust was monitoring spaces, traffic flows and bottlenecks at peak times. Capacity exercises involving directing staff to a new multi-storey car park and preventing them parking on front staff car parks were being done.

"These would help determine the number of passes handed out to staff, she said."

"Unfortunately, a number of staff were extremely abusive to the Interserve staff last Tuesday."

"Staff who are verbally abusive to the security team carrying out their job will have their registration numbers recorded."

Around 3,500 people have now applied for 1,230 parking permits at Dudley hospitals.

### Sobering message from Holocaust survivor Susi

A WOMAN who came to Britain fleeing the horrors of the Holocaust, Susi Bechhofer, will be visiting Dudley to speak at the town's Holocaust Memorial Day event next Friday, January 28.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin and Dudley College Students Union are organising the event.

A commemoration has been held at the college for the last five years to and takes place between noon and 1pm to make it easier for people working in the town to attend. It coincides with the national Holocaust Memorial Day.

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An unfurnished semi detached house set in a popular cul-de-sac location, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Garage and Driveway Parking, Rear Garden.

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£475 PCM



**QUINTON, NAILERS CLOSE**  
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## Hollydale Road, Rowley Regis



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## Uplands Avenue, Rowley Regis



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Offers Over £95,000

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## Apperley Way, Halesowen



£115,000

Three bedroom semi detached property, lounge/diner, kitchen, second reception room, bathroom, double glazing, off road parking, rear garden.

## Dudley Road, Rowley Regis



£150,000

Three bedroom detached, lounge, dining room, study area, downstairs shower room and wc, first floor bathroom, part double glazing and central heating, decked patio area to rear, garden and driveway providing off road parking.

## Chatsworth Road, Halesowen



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## Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis



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A three bedroom three storey mid terrace property which in brief comprises of downstairs wc, kitchen, lounge and bathroom. Front garden and carport to rear. The property also benefits from double glazing.

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## Beeches View Avenue, Halesowen



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## Wesley Avenue, Halesowen



Offers Over £125,000

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## Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath



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Viewing is recommended on this three bedroom property, Master bedroom with wc, two reception rooms, bathroom, kitchen, double glazing and central heating and rear garden.

## Intended Street, Halesowen



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## Park Ridge Drive, Halesowen



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## Upper Ashley Street, Halesowen



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## Highfield Road, Rowley Regis



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## Fan met a legend but lost the autograph



The young Paul Hooper, second left in the cap, lines up for the signature of Sir Stanley Matthews

## Wizard Sir Stanley cast a spell on supporters

By Sarah Hazelwood

A FOOTBALL fanatic who met sporting hero Sir Stanley Matthews in Kidderminster 50 years ago has relived the day – and his devastation at losing the legend's autograph.

Paul Hooper discovered the picture in his collection of sporting memorabilia during a clearout at his home in Forester Way.

The photograph, taken at the then Co-Operative store on Worcester Street in the mid-1950s, shows 10-year-old Paul clutching his autograph book as he stands with other fans.

Sir Stanley, also known as "The wizard of dribble" is regarded as one of the greatest football players of all time. More than five decades ago he was touring the country and went to Kidderminster to promote his new football boots.

The hard-toed, brown leather boots hanging on the wall in the photograph are far removed from today's multicoloured footwear.

Mr Hooper recalls that the England winger spent about an hour at the store speaking to his fans about life as a footballer and his love for the sport.

### Searched

He said: "Over the years I have always kept all of my sporting collectables in a box but when I realised that I couldn't find Stanley's autograph amongst them, I was devastated. I have searched everywhere for it."

"I was absolutely awe-inspired when I met him because he is definitely one of the most famous footballers the game has ever seen."

Comparing the legend with

some of today's Premiership footballers, Mr Hooper believes there will never be another like him.

He said: "Stanley was far from being anything like some of the players we see today, who really take their sport for granted."

"It's not just about the skill any more it's about how much money can be made from it. I idolised Stanley, as did a lot of people. It would be great if anybody from the picture can remember this wonderful day as well as I do."

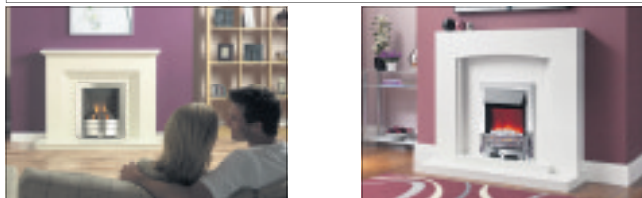
Blackpool and Stoke great Sir Stanley was twice European Footballer of the Year and played his last competitive game in the old first division at the age of 50.

His ashes are buried beneath Stoke City's Britannia Stadium which he officially opened in 1997.

West Brom fan Mr Hooper would welcome a chat with anyone else who met Sir Stanley in Kidderminster. Call 01562 752780.

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## Society painters' 12 months of hard work pays off



Artist Keith Turley launches Brierley Hill Society of Artists' exhibition with Pauline and Peter Carroll



Brierley Hill Society of Artists member Alan Brettle, of Wall Heath, at the Red House Glass Cone, Wordsley

## All-new pieces on show at annual art exhibition

ARTISTS from across the Black Country are displaying works created over the past year in an exhibition at a leading tourist attraction.

Brierley Hill Society of Artists is staging the annual event at Wordsley's Red House Glass Cone until February 27.

The exhibition features a range of paintings and drawings created using acrylic oils, watercolours and charcoal.

Works include land-

scapes and portraits of the artists' friends or relatives.

Others focus on items which have inspired the artist, such as masks and other artworks.

Most of the pictures can be purchased at the end of the exhibition.

Chairman Peter Carroll, who has been a member of the society for 20 years, said: "All of the works are in categories and there is something for everyone to enjoy."

"These are all new

works which have been recently created by our artists. We have a policy that no work is ever displayed twice.

"This ensures when people come along to see the works they will be looking at something new every time."

"We really look forward to staging the exhibition and we hope visitors to the cone enjoy looking at the works."

Mr Carroll said the society was in its 62nd year.



Jacqueline Wilson with her picture of a mask

## Manor owner's hopes despite delay on plan

### Pair having ball with music hall

COMEDY routines and songs from the golden age of British music hall will be performed to raise cash for a Black Country hospice.

The event, called Tararaboomdeay after the famous song, will be held at the Wilson Hall, in Colley Gate, Cradley, on Friday, January 28 at 7.30pm.

It has been organised by staff at Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice and cash raised from the event will be donated to the charity.

Tickets are priced £8 and can be purchased from the hospice's fundraising office on 01384 377778. The show will feature comedy sketches and songs made famous by music hall acts such as Marie Lloyd and Vesta Tilley.

Both acts were among the best-known performers of their day.

Fundraising administrator Sue Davison said: "Not only is this an event to raise funds for the hospice it also celebrates more than 100 years of comedy and music."

"It promises to be an excellent event and we are hoping around 160 people will attend. It is certainly something a little different and we hope people enjoy it."



Lisa Smith and Sue Downing prepare for the fun of the Tararaboomdeay show



Christopher Firmstone

THE owner of an 18th century ancestral home near Stourbridge said he had been given new hope of saving his home, despite his plans being hit by a further delay.

A scheme to build 14 homes in the grounds of Wordsley Manor would raise £400,000 for renovations to the stately home. The Grade II listed building has been home to Christopher Firmstone's family for 160 years.

Mr Firmstone, aged 73, says parts of the house, off Meadowfields Close in Wordsley, are in a dilapidated state and the family could be forced to sell up due to the high cost of the works.

Developers Selbourne Homes have been embroiled in a row with conservation group Natural England over the future of wildlife on the site.

### Positive

Dudley Council's development control committee last week agreed to defer the planning application for the new homes.

The delay aims to give Selbourne Homes more time to draw up a suitable scheme to help protect slow worms and bats found at the site.

Mr Firmstone said he was "heartened" that the plan had not been rejected.

"I think that it is positive that they didn't dismiss the plan and I am hopeful that another strategy can be organised so as to overcome these difficulties," he said.

"I'm actually extremely heartened by the decision and hope these wildlife issues can be cleared up."

Natural England objected as it says the developers do not have a scheme to protect slow worms at the site.





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### women seeking men

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**FEMALE** 51, slim, 5ft 4ins, genuine, caring, seeks soul mate who is genuine and caring. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356761

**OPEN** friendly Christian female, professional, slim, kind, caring, Christian male for friendship and more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 348867

**ATTRACTIVE** female, 42, slim, brunette, no ties, N/S, likes travel, nights out, weekends away, seeks slim male for possible relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 327579

**30YRS** old curvy black female seeks older male for cosy nights in. ACA Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357143

**LITTLE** bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 363428

**I'M** still single! Waiting for a nice guy of any age to sweep me off my feet. I'm fun loving and looking for a good time. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357141

**ATTRACTIVE** 40yr old female, brunette, slim, trendy, no ties, high morals, seeks male for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 311619

**YOUNG** looking, pretty female, 40, brunette, no ties, N/S, seeks attractive, refined male for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 313115

**FRIENDLY** outgoing, sociable lady, 34 but looks mid 20's (its true) W/LTM adventurous male 18 - 65, I'm open to meet agesthings, happy to try most things. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356761

**Hi** I'm Emma, a 31yr old smiley lady. I love fun and am looking for excitement with a fun male, I want to make you happy, age unimportant. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355785

**FEMININE** lady, attractive, intelligent and slim seeks genuine strong minded male, I have so many interests please call to hear them. ACA Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355783

**LADY** N/S, car owner, seeks lonely, retired gent with old fashioned values for friendship/days out and holidays. Stourbridge. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 354183

**CURVY** red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks older male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 377432

**SINGLE** mum, non drinker, seeks male for nights out, meals and lots of fun. Dudley. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 353085

**ATTRACTIVE** slim blonde, 45, seeks honest, caring, genuine male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349651

**ATTRACTIVE** nurse, 48, 5ft 6ins, cinema, walks, country, W/LTM attractive male of similar age for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 341473

**ATTRACTIVE** female, 45, slim, affectionate, intelligent, seeks honest, caring male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 301001

**SLIM** 32yr old blonde, kind, caring, good listener, honest, likes to have fun, seeks male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 339373

**SLIM** attractive, self sufficient lady, 44, GSOH, seeks special male, 35-50, to share evening in/out, theatre, possible relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 351813

**PETITE** dark haired lady, 43, size 10, seeks considerate, N/S male, 25-50 for fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 338651

**FEMALE** kind, giving, thoughtful, sensitive, seeks lifetime friend to love and understand me for who I am. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 350397

**72YR** old widower, smart, likes travel, conversation, dancing, cooking, missing that special man in her life who is easy-going and N/S. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349265

**53YR** old female, young at heart, likes cinema, theatre, meals out, pubs, walks, holidays, seeks genuine, trustworthy male, 48-56. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 339275

**ATTRACTIVE** single mum, 40, outgoing, seeks similar guy for good times, possible relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 348919

**PRINCE** wanted, must be 6ft, loving, caring and honest, no old frogs, I am late 50's and attractive. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 337465

**WEST** Midlands female, 4, attractive, slim, divorced, N/S, seeks slim, clean, attractive male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 343735

**SLIM** professional, attractive, amiable lady, 55, seeks genuine, articulate, professional gent, 55 plus with GSOH and enjoys the good things in life. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356411

**LISA** 32, size 8, seeks male, 32-48 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 346713

**BLONDIE** attractive, educated lady, tall, slim, curvy, 47, seeks tall, professional, 40-52. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 362478

**28YR** old brunette, seeks fun loving, adventurous male for relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 380918

**DO** you know what women want? 40s of old petite lady needs spilling and lots of love by attractive male, 45-55. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 327573

**LADY** 76, N/S, caring, respectable, W/LTM gentleman, 70-76 for outings, holidays, day trips and friendship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 340021

**ATTRACTIVE** glamorous, black female, young 44, seeks male for friendship/dating and LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 339799

**ATTRACTIVE** slim female, 64, divorced, tall, 5ft 3ins, modern, young at heart, seeks genuine, nice looking, clean male, 57-67. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 338315

**60YR** old lady, young at heart, divorced, medium build, likes kisses, cuddles, seeks gent, 50-61 with GSOH and similar likes. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 334627

**WEST** Bromwich female, late 50's, modern, romantic, easygoing, seeks active, genuine male, 45-50 for LTR. Driver preferred. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 336759

**GENUINE** West Bromwich female, smoker, many interests, seeks fit male, driver preferred for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 334841

**COUNTRY** loving female, black hair, green eyes, GSOH, likes countryside, cosy nights in, music, seeks similar male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 333797

**LADY** 50, slim, GSOH, likes cooking, nights out, seeks genuine guy, 50-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 333183

**STEFF** dark hair, single mum, small build, likes cosy nights in/out, seeks single dad, 30-40 for friendship, possible relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 333173

**WHITE** curvy female 33, GSOH, likes nice things in life, seeks gent 43-57. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 325939

**WIDOW** black hair, green eyes, likes countryside, pubs, music, nights in, seeks similar male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 332231

**BLACK** female, 38, seeks male, 30-50, adventurous, fun loving, daring and caring. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 327355

**BLONDIE** female, 32, fun loving, likes letting her hair down and kicking her heels up, caring, considerate, seeks likeminded male, 25-40. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 323417

**ATTRACTIVE** widow, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, likes meals out, holidays, W/LTM gent, 70-80 for friendship and happiness. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 330461

**YOUNG** bubbly black lady, likes wine/dining, seeks mature male for fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 328669

**RITA** 32, size 16-18, 5ft 4ins, seeks male, 30-50 for friendship and more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 324709

**STUNNING** Caribbean black beauty, 33, size 10, 5ft 9ins, intelligent, caring, classy, seeks generous, solvent, romantic, male, 33-45 for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 326751

**BOSSY** lady, 44, dark hair, fit, slim, good looking, seeks male, 40-50 who will do as he is told. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 326119

**GENUINE** easygoing lady, 80's, N/S, seeks likeminded gent, 65-75 for friendship and company. Must be genuine. West Midlands. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 325719

**CURVY** black female, seeks genuine male, 28-40 to make me laugh and have fun. Must have GSOH. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 317387

**YOUNG** 72yr old female, slim, active, attractive, likes walks, seeks similar male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 324441

**LADY** 60's, seeks male for friendship, holidays and socialising. Car driver with ability to tow a caravan a bonus. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 324265

**PETITE** blonde lady, 56, OHAC, nice countryside, nights out, dancing, cinema, theatre, holidays, seeks gent with similar interests. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 330395

**ATTRACTIVE** petite female, 34, single mum, likes nights in/out, cinema, seaside, days out, seeks male with similar interests. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 317151

**LINDA** 70's, likes theatre, dancing, seeks nice gent for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355891

**KIND** romantic, loving lady, 43, slight disability, seeks genuine, caring male for relationship. Telford. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 354533

**YVETTE** pretty, stylish, modern, 44, outgoing, bubbly, sporty, seeks male for nights in/out. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 351997

**SHROPSHIRE** female, 40, seeking friendship/relationship with a genuine male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 353071

**SLIM** fit, bubbly female can't wait to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. ACA. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 367066

**LONG** haired blonde, 37, enjoys meals out but would love to cook a romantic meal for the man of her dreams. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 361076

**TALL** curvy female, 36dd, loves music, looking for fun and romance with dark male. Give me a call. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 359238

**KATIE** mid 20's, brunette, brown eyes, slim, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 328015

**43** SINGLE mum, new to area, red hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks handsome guy 30-40 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 346715

**ATTRACTIVE** slim blonde, 45, seeks many interests. GSOH, seeks kind, genuine, loyal male for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 327485

**FEMININE** caring, young, mid 60's N/S woman, varied interests, seeks genuine, loyal male of similar age to share togetherness and LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 321931

**ARE** you a local, caring, tactile, N/S 60's male, wishing to meet a feminine woman with similar qualities for a LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 320861

**PROFESSIONAL** lady, young 50, fashionable, pleasant, kind, likes countryside, outdoors, holidays, family life, seeks pleasant, committed Christian male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 316403

**SLIM** attractive 44yr old female, N/S, no ties, likes travel, nights out, seeks male, 40-50 for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 341491

**HELEN** 38, one child, blonde hair, 5ft 6ins, slim, attractive, likes swimming, dancing, seeks male, 43-53 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 331399

**MICHELLE** black British, 30, curvy, slim, size 12, 5ft 5ins, sociable, friendly, understanding, loving, seeks male, 30-38 to enjoy romantic night. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 317945

**FRIENDLY** black female, attractive, 46, single mum, professional, seeks attractive, solvent, trendy, professional, genuine male for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349865

**VANESSA** fun loving single mum, 5ft 4ins, brown eyes, seeks kind, loving, genuine male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 304135

**ATTRACTIVE** tall, black female, 51, 6ft, slim-medium build, kind, honest, considerate, own home, seeks genuine, tall, faithful, 6ft plus male, 45-70 with own home for serious relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349211

**FEMALE** medium build, seeks nice N/S male, 40-42 for fun and friendship, maybe more. West Midlands. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 337985

**MAUREEN** seeks male 32-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 323543

**WIDOWED** female, 65, likes socialising, holidays, meals out, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 339765

**FEMALE** likes socialising, nights out, seeks attractive male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 336477

**PRETTY** size 8 female, 19, seeks male to spoil and treat her like a Princess. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 335019

**VAL** 35, single mum, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 334695

**SHROPSHIRE** female, 40, seeks special relationship with a genuine male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355959

**KAREN** 47, 5ft 5ins, civil servant, attractive, down to earth, likes drink, dance, socialising, home life, seeks tall, professional male, N/S for loving relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 324349

**IRENE** 72, N/S, active, 5ft 2ins, slim, blonde hair, seeks similar male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 331301

**MARIA** 38, blonde, 5ft 5ins, caring, likes nights in/out, seeks caring male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 330549

**ATTRACTIVE** widow, 5ft 7ins, slim, GSOH, OHAC, likes holidays, days out, seeks gent for friendship and happiness. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 330037

**SUE** young thinking 54yr old female, varied interests, likes music, walks, cinema, pets, football, seeks N/S, genuine male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 328177

**GUYS** Text n' Chat. Text in now and chat to local people. Send : **CHAT207** To : **65125** (T&C's below).

**MALE** 60's, widower, seeks nice lady who likes shooting, country life and sports. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357559

**46YR** old male, 5ft 5ins, blue eyes, short hair, N/S, intelligent, likes swimming, fishing, walks, days out, seeks similar honest female. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 352575

**KEITH** 57, white, smoker, seeks female, 48-58. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357467

**62YR** old widower, OHAC, GSOH, many interests, seeks female to love and cherish, 50-60. Halesowen/Stourbridge. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357347

**WALSALL** male 51, OHAC, tactile, seeks female for nights in and out, possible LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357329

**SOUL** girl wanted, age 45-51 Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356855

**DIVORCED** male, Cancerian, 57, looks younger, seeks special lady to fill the empty space in life. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349993

**STEVE** 54, tall, slim, fit, seeks female for friendship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 331309

**MALE** seeks attractive female for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356437

**62YR** old honest, caring gent, seeks female for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357121

**STEVE** 54, seeks large, mature female, 35-65 for fun. Can travel. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 330103

**MALE** 46, N/S, seeks female to sparkle back into life. Wolverhampton. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 353781

**SINGLE** dad 46, average looks, N/S, 5ft 6ins, dark hair, likes music, country walks, pubs, seeks female, 35-50 for friendship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356763

**DAVE** 68, widower, kind, loving, likes holidays, meals out, theatre, nights in, seeks slim, attractive female, 50-68 for friendship, maybe more. Bridgnorth. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355395

**EARLY** 50s male, seeks tactile female for kisses, cuddles and naughty indoor fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 351923

**KEVIN** professional male, new to area, seeks friendly, laidback female for nights out. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 317489

**STEVE** 47, medium build, seeks female for nights in, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 353631

**MIKE** 47, brown hair, blue eyes, tall, easygoing, romantic, likes films, walks, sports, meals out, seeks soul mate to spoil for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 322711

**SHEFFIELD** male, 42, genuine, honest, lots of love to give, seeks special lady, 35-42. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 383402

**GENUINE** male, 6ft 1ins, blue eyes, shaven head, nice personality, seeks genuine, honest, loving female, 30-40's, slim-medium build, Dudley. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355735

**41YR** old professional male, seeks attractive, mature female, 50-70 for relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355637

**KIDDERMINSTER** man, 55, 6ft, slim, handsome, honest, true Knight, seeks princess for happiness, romance and fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355297

**WALSALL** male, 56, good looking, N/S, placid nature, seeks similar female, any age for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 354961

### men seeking women

Guys Text n' Chat. Text in now and chat to local people. Send : **CHAT207** To : **65125** (T&C's below).

**MALE** 60's, widower, seeks nice lady who likes shooting, country life and sports. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357559

**46YR** old male, 5ft 5ins, blue eyes, short hair, N/S, intelligent, likes swimming, fishing, walks, days out, seeks similar honest female. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 352575



# the pulse

## Multi-talented Elaine in concert as she turns another Paige



The Secret Sisters, Laura and Lydia Rogers – concert date

### Sisters in Symphony

A PAIR of young sisters reviving the sounds of classic 1940s and 50s country music will be the special guest of singer/songwriter Ray LaMontagne when he appears with his Pariah Dogs at Birmingham Symphony Hall on February 20.

The Sunday night concert will feature The Secret Sisters, Laura and Lydia Rogers of Alabama, who recently recorded their debut album in Nashville with legendary pro-

ducers T Bone Burnett and Dave Cobb.

Their self-titled album combines harmonies on a selection of broken-hearted laments, honky tonk toe-tappers and easy listening standards.

The duo recently reached a wider audience with their performance on Jools Holland's Hootenanny.

Tickets for LaMontagne's concert are priced at £22.50 and £25.

**A**WARD-winning musical theatre star, multi-platinum recording artist and popular BBC Radio 2 presenter Elaine Paige, returns to the concert stage in 2011 including a performance at Birmingham Symphony Hall on March 7.

She has starred in numerous West End productions and on Broadway and in concert internationally, sweeping to fame with her performance as Eva Peron in Evita.

Shortly afterwards she created the role of Grizabella in the original production of Cats and the classic song Memory became one of the songs most closely associated with Elaine, pictured right.

Last November saw the release of her latest studio album, Elaine Paige & Friends.

Recorded in New York and produced by legendary record producer Phil Ramone for Rhino/Warner Bros Records, it features duets with 14 of her favourite musical performers.

#### Selection

These included, in alphabetical order: Paul Anka, John Barrowman, Michael Bolton, Kenny G, Barry Manilow, Johnny Mathis, Idina Menzel, Olivia Newton-John, Billy Ocean, Sinéad O'Connor, LeAnn Rimes, Jon Secada, Neil Sedaka and Dionne Warwick.

The album entered the Top 20 in the UK and Elaine was awarded a gold disc for sales of more than 100,000 by the end of the year.

Her return to the concert stage with a new show will feature a selection of her favourite standards, her greatest hits and some of the modern classics from her new album.

Tickets are priced from £29.50 to £38.50 (with special packages including meeting the star after the show for £80) and are available from the box office on 0121 780 3333 or visit [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk) online.



The King's Speech review – page 30

**YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING**



Theatre round-up – page 25



Panto preview – page 30

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# Audience to revel in Chess masterpiece

THERE'S more to Craig Revel Horwood than judging dancers on Strictly Come Dancing.

The director has won acclaim for his flamboyant touring revival of 80s West End musical Chess, a collaboration between Tim Rice and Abba's Björn Ulvæus and Benny Andersson.

The show, featuring former Wicked performer Shona White, was a hit in Wolverhampton last year and returns to the West Midlands for a run at Birmingham Hippodrome from February 7 to 12.

The show, about the duel between rival Russian and American chess grandmasters, features such songs as One Night in Bangkok, Pity The Child and the classic I Know Him So Well.

Tickets are priced from £13.50 to £37.50, available online at [www.birminghamhippodrome.com](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com) or by calling 0844 338 5000.



Shona White takes centre stage in Craig Revel Horwood's revival of Chess, which is returning to the West Midlands with a run at Birmingham Hippodrome

## Cantankerous Tom will soften your heart From Cornish shanties to Definite Diva songs

WARTIME weepy Goodnight Mister Tom is being brought to the stage at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next month.

The play is an adaptation of Michelle Magorian's hugely popular children's novel about how a young London evacuee with a sad secret forges a friendship with his cantankerous old host, the titular Mister Tom, in a rural community.

Playing Mister Tom, a role associated with the late John Thaw from a popular TV film version, is Royal Shakespeare

Company actor Oliver Ford Davies, who will be familiar to fans of the blockbuster Star Wars movies as Sio Bibble in The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith.

Goodnight Mister Tom is staged at the Grand Theatre from February 8 to 12 with matinees on the Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Tickets are priced from £6.50 to £22.50. Contact the box office on 01902 429212 or at [www.grandtheatre.co.uk](http://www.grandtheatre.co.uk)

CORNISH harmonies as smooth as clotted cream will be heard at Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday, January 25, when Fort Isaac's Fisherman's Friends will be in concert with songs and sea shanties from the North Cornwall fishing village (tickets £17.50).

Other forthcoming musical highlights in the city include on Thursday, January 27, a lunchtime recital by Ji Liu, winner of the Brant Piano Competition, performing Bach's Goldberg Variations (Town Hall,

£7.50); on the same day, just over an hour later at 2.15pm, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra bring spring to the city early with a performance of Beethoven and Schumann's Spring Symphonies (Symphony Hall, £9.50-£35).

On January 28, the CBSO present showbiz and pop favourites at the hall with Definitive Divas - Mary Carewe, Grainne Renihan and Emer McParland. Tickets cost £9.50 to £39.50. Call 0121 780 3333 or visit [www.tshs.co.uk](http://www.tshs.co.uk)

### COMPETITION



## Music memories are just the ticket

DIRECT from the USA and celebrating 50 years of number one Motown hits, the Magic of Motown tribute concert show is heading for Wolverhampton. It is due to book into the Grand Theatre on Saturday, February 5 and the Chronicles have teamed up with the promoters to offer eight readers the chance to win free tickets and extras. The prize will consist of a pair of tickets, DVD, CD and programme for the 5pm performance. The ticket price is £19.50 and there is a later performance at 8pm (£21.50).

The record label that brought the likes of the Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, the Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye, Lionel Richie, Martha Reeves, Smokey Robinson, Mary Wells and the Isley Brothers to the world enjoyed its first number one hit in 1961. Please Mr Postman by the Marvelettes was followed by a phenomenal 56 other Billboard chart toppers.

To enter, answer this simple question: In which American city was the Motown label based?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Motown Competition, Chronicles (Editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: January 27.

Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final. There is no cash alternative. To buy tickets contact the box office: 01902 429212 <http://www.grandtheatre.co.uk>



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# Classic tale for a panto, oh yes it is!

## Theatre

A LONG-RUNNING pantomime group is preparing to bring its version of classic fairytale Beauty and the Beast to the Black Country stage this weekend.

Stourbridge Pantomime Company will perform the show at the town hall, in Market Street, between January 22 and 29.

Evening shows begin at 7.15pm except on January 23 when there is a 6.15pm start time.

There are also matinee shows at 2.15pm on January 22, 27 and 29 and at 1.15pm on January 23.

## Running

It is the 44th show to be staged by the pantomime group which has been running since October 1967 and has performed a pantomime every January since 1969.

Spokeswoman for the company Wendy Hemming said the group was looking forward to performing the pantomime.

"It is an excellent show which is based on the traditional version rather than the animated Disney film," she said.

"A mixture of masks and make-up is used to create the Beast in the show."

Tickets are priced £12, or £7 with concessions, and are available by calling 01384 836963 or the box office on 01384 812959.



Lara Mitchell, aged 14, from Church Hill, Hagley, prepares for her role as the fairy in Beauty and the Beast at Stourbridge town hall



Golden Globe winner Colin Firth, playing George VI, is outstanding as the stammer-plagued star of The King's Speech



# Tears and laughter are Colin's crowning glory

**THE KING'S SPEECH (12A)**  
The British are coming!" famously declared screen-writer Colin Welland in 1982 when he collected his Oscar for Chariots Of Fire.

Nearly 30 years later, his prophecy seems to be coming true.

Slumdog Millionaire was the toast of Tinseltown in 2008, garnering almost every trophy in sight, and now The King's Speech is poised to do the same, and win Colin Firth a well-deserved Academy Award into the bargain.

Last year, the British actor was cruelly denied a golden statuette for his revelatory performance as a suicidal gay lecturer in Tom Ford's directorial debut, A Single Man.

This year, he should definitely practise his self-deprecating acceptance speech for this heartrending portrayal of King George VI in Tom Hooper's majestic comedy drama. On Sunday he picked up the Golden Globe for best actor in the awards given by Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which are seen as a good indicator for the Oscars.

## Cinema

Firth is matched laugh for laugh by Geoffrey Rush in imperious form, and the cream of homegrown acting talent provides illustrious support, including Timothy Spall as Winston Churchill.

The King's Speech is an impeccably crafted chapter from recent British history that charts a remarkable and unlikely friendship between two men from opposite sides of the class divide.

When King George V (Michael Gambon) dies in 1936, eldest son Edward (Guy Pearce) ascends to the throne, but his reign is shrouded in scandal as he continues to romance American divorcee, Wallis Simpson (Eve Best).

Love triumphs over duty and Edward abdicates, forcing youngest son Albert (Firth) into the spotlight.

However, the newly crowned King George VI suffers from a crippling stammer, which renders him unable to deliver public addresses.

With war imminent and the country looking to its King for leadership, Queen Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter) approaches unconventional Australian-

born speech therapist Lionel Logue (Rush) on the recommendation of a friend.

"She said your antipodean methods were both unconventional and controversial. Those are two of my favourite words," smiles Elizabeth, persuading Lionel to help her husband overcome his fears.

The King's Speech is a crowd-pleasing, heart-tugging gem, seen through the eyes of a man who is frightened to say a word for fear of what might – or might not – come out.

David Seidler's script elegantly dissects the relationship between monarch and commoner, creating memorable exchanges that provide the film with huge laughs and a strong emotional heartbeat.

Firth delivers the performance of his life, battling valiantly against his condition, while Rush is hysterical as the linguist who refuses any concessions to his king.

"My castle, my rules," he maintains. "Their double-act is glorious, including an unforgettable barrage of expletives in the name of therapy."

"Do you know the f word?" asks Lionel. "F... f... fornication?" replies Albert nervously.

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# Sports boost for BMW M3



The suspension is lowered by another 10mm



The BMW M3's purposeful-looking interior



The optional Competition Package cleverly enhances BMW's already potent M3 sports saloon in all the right places

**D**ESPITE BMW's latest M3 boasting a muscular V8 engine and a considerable 420 horsepower, some fans of the high performance coupe wanted more; more control, more driver involvement.

More of a precision instrument than the similar size but distinctly hooligan-esque C63 AMG from Mercedes, the M3 offers the enthusiastic driver a versatile and accomplished experience. Yet, some critics have argued that the car lacks an 'edge' when it comes to extracting the maximum enjoyment. BMW's response is the Competition Package.

Let's get something straight, though; the M3 isn't a bad car. In fact, it's a very good car.

From the original, trend-setting E30 to the present day, the evolutionary process has been a steady one. The application of more power, more performance and more useful technology has seen the M3 be transformed from race track special to supercar-baiting all-rounder.

In a bid to ensure drivers felt more at one with their M3, BMW devised the Competition Package.

Don't worry, there isn't a roll cage or cut off switch in sight – it's not that kind of competition bundle. With sus-

pension lowered by 10mm and the inclusion of some rather attractive-looking 19-inch alloy wheels, this particular M3 looks more purposeful even before a key is turned.

Mechanical changes aside, BMW also turned its attention to the car's electronics. Enhancements to the M3's Dynamic Stability Control system and the inclusion of a Sport mode for the Electronic Damper control system complete the changes.

## Attractive

So what about the practical experience? In a nutshell the car is good – very good. The V8 motor is and always has been a gem. It sounds fantastic when pushed hard; barking its way through the gears like a mini-me Nascar racer. A criminally infectious experience if you value your driving licence.

At a more intellectual level, the presence of the Competition Package add-ons subtly raise the enjoyment level by allowing you to further fine tune the car's electronic helpers and go that bit harder and faster.

You get the best of both worlds in so much as the car can assume the role of tame pussy cat for the schlep to work. Fiddle with the electronics and you're suddenly at the helm of a borderline track special. Everything – sights, sounds, sensations – shift up a notch or two.

The current M3 has always been an accessible car in terms of its performance, and the addition of the Competition Package only serves to enhance its appeal. After a few miles of 'press on' motoring you could even say that the handful of changes do much to unlock the car's underlying potential.

With the ability to fine tune the suspension and stability control settings, seriously keen drivers can now delve that bit deeper into the M3's reserves.

On the road the car's lower stance might appear modest but this feature and the switch to standard fit 19-inch wheels noticeably sharpens up responses. That favourite B road of yours just got a whole lot more interesting.

The same is true when engaging in higher speed activities on, say a track. It's at times like this that you fully understand the car's true potential; the retuned electronics work tirelessly in the background to help and enhance the experience, leaving the M3's vocal V8 motor to take centre stage.

## Sharpens

Those same critics will no doubt be quick to complain about the perceived increased focus on electronic aids in what is supposed to be a driver's car, but once behind the wheel you'll soon discover that you're still very much in control.

From the car's slick manual gearbox to its weighty, accurate steering and progressive brakes, BMW's M3 offers appreciative and enthusiastic drivers an experience that's second to none in the high performance coupe market. Factor in the Competition Package enhancements and the search for the car's 'edge' is over. It's here and it's all good.

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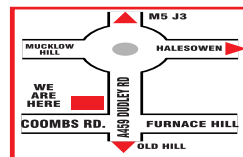
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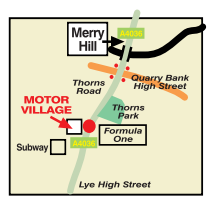
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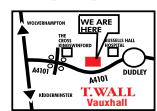
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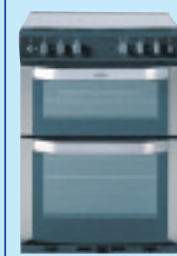
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# sport

## SAXONS FAIL TO TAKE CHANCES

Stourbridge Saxons 15 Wharfedale 30

WHARFEDALE claimed the double over a misfiring Saxons side at Stourton Park.

But it would have been the home side celebrating had they managed to convert some of their first half pressure into points. Stourbridge skipper Ben Hughes handed them the early start with a try after just six minutes, the visitors responding with a Tom Barrett penalty 10 minutes later, *writes David Lawrence.*



Resistance is futile: Ben Hughes heads for the line

## Lawrence may make surprise return on road

PROP Andi Lawrence could make a surprise return for Stourbridge Saxons when they head to Cornwall for their National One match at Launceston this weekend.

The powerful tight-head left Stourton Park in the summer to play in France but has decided to return to the Black Country and bolster Neil Mitchell's side as they push for a top five finish. The Saxons have lost their opening two games of 2011, the second a 30-15 home loss to Wharfedale that saw prop Will Davis have what looked a good try chalked off by the referee.

Mitchell admits that such decisions can knock

the confidence of players. "Tim Pickard had a try disallowed at their place and it was the same referee up there," the Stourbridge chief pointed out. "There is so little in these games that decisions like that can really affect the players."

"It can often turn into a confidence thing and we had three or four further opportunities to score a try when we were on their line but failed to take them. We have to be more clinical in those areas."

Centre Tom Jarvis scored a try on Saturday despite suffering from flu and it is hoped he will be back to full strength. Charlie Hayter should be back in contention following concussion.

But from then on the Saxons dominated the proceedings only to find some stubborn defending from the Yorkshire side blocking their way.

Prop Will Davis had what appeared to be a legitimate try chalked off by referee John Meredith and the visitors had second row Talite Vaioleti sent to the sin bin, the official losing patience after one too many penalty offences in front of their own line.

But there was still no way through and Stourbridge paid the price as Wharfedale bagged a penalty and brace of tries late in the half.

Vaioleti set up the first with a powerful run through midfield before releasing winger Simon Horsfall who dotted down between the posts.

There was further misery for the Stourton Park supporters as they saw back row Dan Solomi driven over.

### Revival

Barrett converted both tries to hand the Greens a 20-5 lead at the end of a half that had seen them on the back foot for the majority of it.

With the wind at their backs in the second period, hopes were high for a Saxons revival and they edged closer to their target when James Rodley was driven over on 53 minutes.

But that momentum again came to nothing when winger Simon Frewin was shown a red card for stamping and the Yorkshire outfit took full advantage.

Number eight Rob Baldwin dived over from the back of a scrum for a third Wharfedale try on the hour with winger James Druce claiming a fourth when he skipped in on the overlap three minutes later.

Centre Tom Jarvis dived in at the corner for a third try late on.

But the visitors never looked like relinquishing their lead.

## Single goal condemns Yeltz to defeat

HALESOWEN TOWN remain rooted firmly in the Zamaretti Premier relegation zone after a narrow defeat in a game of few chances spoilt by the Hemel Hempstead wind.

Early on, Hemel's Jake Gilbert grazed the post and Jeff Hammond was denied by visiting goalkeeper Simon Flower from

### Hemel Hempstead 1 Halesowen Town 0

Danny May's through ball as the home side went in search of their first league for more than two months.

The Tudors snatched the winner after just 16 minutes when Hammond headed his

debut home goal into an empty net with goalkeeper Flower left stranded from a long ball.

But the Yeltz almost drew level three minutes later when Mark Smith met Lee Chilton's deep cross and goalkeeper Michael McEntergart pushed the ball around his post.

Before half-time, Halesowen's

Chilton fired a cross-shot just wide and an appeal that Hemel goalkeeper Michael McEntergart handled outside his area was fell on deaf ears.

The game failed to spark into life again after the interval although Flower made a splendid fingertip save from dangerous home striker Dennis Femenore.

## First reversal in seven for Hawks

### Boys League

#### CS Colts 1 Halas Hawks West 0

HALAS under-nines West fell to their first defeat in seven games, losing to a well organised Colts side.

Joshua Wyman, Harry Williams and Sam Bulmer all went close but with five minutes remaining Halas failed to clear a floated cross and were punished by a neat finish. Even then they went close through a goalmouth scramble but could not find the net.

**Halas Hawks East 1 Wordsley North 2**  
Rickio Fairin-Hall put the under-10s into the lead with a fine strike. But Wordsley equalised from the kick-off with a splendid solo goal.

After half-time both teams seemed to cancel each other out but Wordsley scored again with what proved to be the winner. Fairin-Hall and Louie Jones shared the Hawks' player of the match award.

#### Wombourne 1 Halas Hawks 1

Mohamed Yafai scored the under-11s' goal in their dawl with Wombourne.

#### West Hagley South 1 Halas Hawks West 1

The under-12 West side continued its good start to 2011 with a hard earned point against West Hagley.

The home side went ahead early on but Halas equalised before the break through their player of the match, Josh Rodgers.

#### Halas Hawks 1 Brierley Hill East 4

A 10-man under-13s team took on high flyers Brierley Hill and impressed despite trailing 2-1 at the interval.

The Halas lads battled superbly but conceded two second-half goals. Jack Guest was their scorer.

#### Halas Hawks 4 Wombourne 0

The under-14s maintained their winning form by sticking to a passing game despite difficult conditions. Goals arrived from Jake Walley (2), Louis Ezeuile and Dan Willetts.

#### Duncan Edwards 1 Halas Hawks 12

Despite only fielding 10 men, the under-15s had a big win in which goalkeeper James Andrews scored a hat-trick and took player of the match!

Other scorers were Lewis Hatfield (4), Rhys Edwards (2), Jamie Nicholls, Alex Theodisi and Danny Hodges.

#### Halas Hawks 7 Brierley Hill 2

The under-16s had a comfortable win over Brierley Hill Bullets with goals coming from man of the match, Tom Stevens (3), Scott Pope (2), Guy Millward and Alex Chapell.

### Halas Hawks

#### Girls League Halas Hawks 7 Santiago Colts 1

The under-12 girls created numerous chances but had only two goals to show for them by half-time with Abigail Gennard and Amy Plimmer converting.

But goals flowed in the second half through Plimmer (2), Bethan Bryan and Lucy and Sophie Heaselgrave.

#### Wordsley Wasps 0 Halas Hawks 4

The under-15 girls started very strongly but could not find the net until the 20th minute. A fine ball across the goalmouth saw player of the match Chloe Biddleston, score from a very tight angle.

Halas added a second a few minutes later from Rhiannon Murray.

In the second half Wordsley threatened only to be repelled by keeper Livi Woollams and the match was wrapped up with Liz McAleenan and Lauren Taylor both scoring.

#### Halas Hawks 4 Kewford Eagles 1

Halas retained their league topping spot despite falling behind early on.

Kewford, with the advantage of wind and slope, could have gone further ahead but for two excellent saves by Gemma Scriven.

Gemma College equalised from a corner and in the second half the home side took control, going on to win the match 4-1 with a brace from Katy Monk and a long-range, left-foot shot from College.

The Halesowen Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Wolverhampton on Thursday, January 20, 2011.

## McHone homes in on goal to insure a Cup victory



Paul McHone successfully negotiates the penalty area traffic to head in the first Stourbridge goal

## Back home Glassboys stun City

STOURBRIDGE produced a rip-roaring display to condemn Cambridge City to only their third league defeat of the season on Saturday.

Playing at the War Memorial Ground for the first time in five weeks, Gary Hackett's men took the game to the visitors from the off.

Early Stourbridge pressure paid off after seven minutes as Paul Lloyd floated over a cross from the right that keeper Zac Barrett failed to deal with under pressure. He could only palm the ball to the feet of Ben Billingham whose shot was blocked.

But, when the ball rebounded to him, he tucked away, a left-foot shot inside the keeper's left-hand post.

Seventeen minutes from time Stourbridge grabbed a second goal when Ryan Rowe found the net with a crisp low strike.

Lindon Dovey made sure of victory three minutes from time.

STOURBRIDGE made it through to the last eight of the Red Insure Cup on Tuesday but were taken to the wire by the Central Division visitors.

Stourbridge made most of the running in the opening 45 minutes to open up a two-goal cushion but Daventry hit back in the second period.

The Glassboys started brightly and in the second minute Jamie Oliver started a move down the left and picked up Drew Canavan's first-time flick to fire a low shot against the post.

As the home side continued to press, they went ahead in the 16th minute.

A low drive from Linden Dovey drew a save from Andrew Kemp down low to his right, but from the resulting left-wing corner taken by Canavan, Paul McCone steered a close range near-post header beyond Kemp.

### Smart

The Northamptonshire visitors threatened for the first time on 29 minutes with Lewis Solly getting behind a 20-yard drive from Adam Confue and the Glassboys responded with some smart build-up play culminating with Dovey flashing an 18-yard shot from the right-hand corner of the area past the far post.

### Stourbridge 2 Daventry Town 1

Daventry then began to come more into the game and twice went close towards half-time. In the 40th minute Rob Foster played the ball to Martin Hutchcox who found Tom Berwick for a shot that Solly managed to push away.

Three minutes later a Daventry free-kick was only half-cleared and Aaron Parkinson hit a dipping shot that came back off the cross-bar.

On the stroke of half-time, though, another flowing Stourbridge move brought reward for the home side. Josh Craddock threaded the ball into the run of Dyson who pulled back a low cross back the right-hand byline for Dovey, whose shot had just enough on it to beat Kemp.

The Glassboys could have put the result beyond doubt soon after the re-start. Dovey bore down on goal and rolled the ball past Kemp only for Josh Blake to clear off the line.

Instead Daventry reduced the arrears on 54 minutes as Berwick wriggled his way through into the right-hand side of the area before cracking a low shot past Solly. The visitors began to ask questions, and although Canavan rattled a 20-yard shot against the Daventry crossbar, home fans were pleased to hear the final whistle.

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